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JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

FOR those of us who wish our children to grow up Jews in faith as well as in name, the subject of religious education must always be one of deep and serious responsibility. We want our children to be not merely well acquainted with the tenets and observances of Judaism; we want them also to hold the former and practise the latter—more than this, we desire them to do so willingly and intelligently, when they shall have grown to manhood and womanhood. We wish them to remain true to the religion of their fathers, not from filial piety, still less from habit or superstition, but from a sincere and enlightened attachment to their religion, an attachment which we earnestly hope may enable them to say through life, in the words of the late Dr. Frankl, “Ich bin so glücklich in meinem Judenthum” (I am so happy in my Judaism.)

The means by which we may attain this end will be the subject of the present paper, and its scope is to be clearly understood as dealing, not with the most fundamental but also most general tenets of our religion, such as the existence of God or the immortality of the soul, but with those specifically Jewish doctrines which distinguish Judaism from theism. There are, however, at the present day many varieties of Judaism, and there should, therefore, logically be also many forms of Jewish religious education. At the risk, therefore, of introducing an unduly personal element, I feel that before advancing any educational theories it will be necessary to give some indications of my own variety of Judaism, not to urge its truth or its superiority over others, but merely to explain the point of view from which I look at religious education, and the goal which I *individually* aim at.

My Judaism then is the Judaism of the Pentateuch, modified no doubt by changes of time and place, and a gradual development, not in the spirit of the religion itself, but in the spirit in which man is able to conceive it. My Judaism teaches me that the people of Israel were and are divinely chosen by God to carry the knowledge of his unity through countless centuries, until “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of

the Lord as the waters cover the seas." It includes the belief that the record of the early history of Israel has been preserved for us in the Bible, together with a number of laws, which, though they do not appear to us to be all of the same value, are yet due to the will of God and to God's inspiration. Thus the Bible is the corner-stone of my Judaism. I can conceive monotheism without the Bible, but not Judaism, and it therefore becomes necessary to indicate my own point of view with regard to the Bible before I can explain how I would have it taught to others.

I do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, nor even in the inspired character of the *whole* book. I do not pretend to sufficient scholarship to enter into such debated questions as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch or the dates of its component parts. Nor can I say that I desire to do so. My Judaism is shaped by the belief in God's election of the people of Israel to be the proclaimers of his unity, and by the firm conviction that in the Pentateuchal narrative between the exodus from Egypt and the death of Moses, we have a record of divine revelation and a code of divinely given laws for our religious and moral guidance. And the firmness with which I hold these beliefs would not be lessened if it were mathematically proved to me that Moses was not the actual writer of the Pentateuch, nor increased if the reverse were as absolutely and positively demonstrated. Judaism for me is happily independent of the establishment of dates or the determination of the authorship of certain, or any, books of the Scriptures.

So far, then, I find it easy enough to define what I have called my point of view with regard to the Bible, but when I come to ask myself what is my attitude towards the early parts of Genesis and the post-Pentateuchal portion of the Scriptures, it is for many reasons less easy to answer categorically. Nor does it appear to me necessary to do so here: I am at present only concerned with a brief outline of my own form of Judaism, and for all practical purposes the principles of my Judaism¹ are those which I have just laid down. I therefore pass at once from Jewish articles of faith to the customs, rites and observances of Judaism, considered (again with a seemingly undue but necessary prominence of the personal element), from my own point of view. I divide them roughly into

¹ I do not say all my religious principles, because, as it is hardly necessary to point out, the immortality of the soul and the kindred doctrines of its spiritual nature, and of its relation to God, are not touched upon before the post-Pentateuchal parts of the Bible.

Sabbath and festival observances, synagogue attendance, and ritual and dietary laws.

No sooner do we approach the ritual and ceremonial part of Judaism than we are at once brought into contact with the Mishnah and the Talmud, two powers that have left their mark on almost every item of Jewish ceremonialism—a mark so deep, that at times it has well-nigh effaced the original biblical impression. It is difficult for me to approach this subject without being conscious of a strong personal bias. The Mishnah and Talmud form no part of my Judaism, they represent for me no religious authority, and never have done so at any period of my life. Consequently, I look upon them from the point of view of a spectator, who sees much to venerate, much to admire, but also much to disregard and disapprove of, and nothing to accept as religious dogma or precept. Again, in the ceremonial as in the dogmatic part of Judaism, I seek my authority in the pages of the Pentateuch, and let it regulate my observance of the Sabbath and of the festivals instituted therein (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement), subject only to the inevitable modifications of time and place.

I have no specially personal views to record here as to the ritual and synagogue attendance, and therefore pass at once to the dietary laws, to which every writer on Jewish ceremonialism has to devote a disproportionate space, in consequence of the Talmud's special elaboration of the subject. How endlessly, and I do not hesitate to add, how needlessly and even harmfully, it has amplified and complicated the biblical commands with regard to food! Three passages in Exodus,¹ three in Leviticus and three in Deuteronomy make up the whole. Thrice (Exodus xxiii. 19 and xxxiv. 26, and Deut. xiv. 21) we find the command not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk: the eleventh chapter of Leviticus and the fourteenth of Deuteronomy each contain the list of forbidden animals, &c., and the remaining passages are devoted to prohibitions respecting eating the flesh of any animal that has been "torn of beasts in the field" or "died of itself," together with the frequently repeated injunction, "only be sure that you eat not the blood." These com-

¹ The extraordinary theory with regard to eating the leg of an animal only after it has gone through certain preparations, has always appeared to me (even from the most orthodox point of view) to be based on a misconception of Genesis xxxii. 32. "Therefore the children of Israel eat not," &c., is surely chronicling a custom, in a note, as it were, not uttering a command or prohibition.

mandments I endeavour to keep. Neither I nor anybody else would wittingly or willingly eat that which is "torn of beasts" or that "died of itself," nor would it occur to anybody to "seethe a kid in its mother's milk," a literal and simple prohibition, which only rabbinical ingenuity could have developed into a system culminating in having separate dishes and other utensils for cooking "milk and meat." The animals forbidden in the Bible, I look upon as still prohibited to Jews, and therefore to be avoided by all who, like myself, desire to preserve as much as possible of the Mosaic ritual. Finally, as regards the "kosher meat" system (in other words the Jewish method of killing the animals, and in very orthodox families of preparing the meat), there is no doubt that it is a rabbinical elaboration of the biblical command not to eat the blood (a command which nobody would desire to infringe in the ancient sense of the words), and was unknown in Bible times. I therefore place the matter on a wholly secular footing: the Jewish method of killing, with all its attendant precautions, tends to make the meat wholesomer and safer for human consumption,¹ and for this reason only I give the preference to "kosher meat," when I can obtain it easily; but I do not do so on any religious grounds, and I make it consequently not a matter of conscience, but one of health or convenience.

Having thus given a brief outline of my own form of Judaism, I now turn to my real subject, namely, the religious education of Jewish children, and I will begin at once by pointing out three things, which make it a difficult and complicated matter in this generation. First, the all pervading spirit of theological and biblical criticism, secondly, the tendency of the age to laxity and indifference to the ceremonial, and what may be called, the disciplinarian part of religion, and thirdly, among the Jews themselves, the ever-increasing difficulty of holding the middle course (which I assume to be as desirable to others as it appears to me) between those who for various reasons desire to throw down all barriers that separate them from the Gentile world and those who endeavour not only to keep up those barriers in their entirety, but even to fill up the breaches which time and altered circumstances have made.

One of the consequences of this state of things, which confronts us at the very threshold of religious education, and adds

¹ This is especially the case among our poor, whose immunity from certain diseases is ascribed, I believe on good authority, to their avoidance of the inferior meat often sold at low rates by non-Jewish butchers.

not a little to our difficulties, is the absence of uniformity between our own particular form of Judaism and Jewish observances and those of our co-religionists, no matter whether they or we be orthodox, reform, new, old, critical, biblical, talmudical, or a mixture of any. How are we to bring up our children to adhere, as we naturally wish them to do, to our own form of Judaism without making them intolerant of other forms—or, on the other hand, how are we to make them really tolerant, without letting toleration become indifference? It is impossible, now-a-days, to bring up children in the belief that all Jews believe and observe exactly what their parents believe themselves and teach them to believe. Others around us are either more or less orthodox, or more or less “broad,” as the phrase goes, than we are ourselves, and sooner or later our children must discover this. It is better to anticipate the discovery by telling them, what is after all the simple fact: “I believe this, I think it is right to do that, and I teach you to believe and do the same, because I think it right. But other people, whom you see acting differently, do so because they hold different opinions—we have therefore no right to judge them or to blame them. Let us only hold firm to what we ourselves believe to be right.” If this is impressed upon a child from his earliest years, there is little fear of his becoming intolerant. It is never too early to set as a watch-word before our children: “Faith in our own beliefs—toleration and respect for those of others.”

Our first object then should be to create in our children an attachment to their religion, which shall last their lives. This is not a difficult task if we feel this attachment ourselves, and if we are not ashamed of owning it. I believe this sort of false shame is common to many Jews, who are sincerely attached to and proud of their religion, but who think they will appear narrow and intolerant if they say so openly and honestly. What is the consequence to the children of such Jews? They see their parents remain Jews, both as to belief and observances, but all is done in a half-hearted way, as if they were perpetually apologising to the world at large for the forms and ceremonies which really they would be most unwilling to forsake. But this deeper feeling they hide from their children as carefully as from the outer world, and these children grow up with the same apologetic attitude (only in their case it is real, not assumed), until after a time the whole thing becomes a mere form that gradually slips away altogether. What we desire to attain is precisely the opposite result, and in order to do this we must make our children conscious from a very early age that we and they are Jews, and rejoice in our Judaism,

and that we have moreover no desire to conceal either our religion or our attachment to it from the eyes of the world. There is, as I have already observed, a tendency among the Jews of our own generation to minimise as much as possible the differences between themselves and their Gentile surroundings. I will not waste time in discoursing on their motives for doing so ; suffice it that the tendency exists, and that it is our duty to combat it. Let us not be afraid of the often used accusation of narrowness and exclusiveness, or rather let us not be afraid of being what some people call narrow and exclusive, so long as we know that we are keeping clear of bigotry and intolerance. We *are* Jews, and if we wish our children to be Jews also—in faith as well as in name—we must begin by letting them know that they are Jews by birth, that they are bound to be grateful and devoted to their native land, but, at the same time, never wanting in faithful love and loyalty to their religion and their race.

It is obvious that a child, as soon as he is made acquainted with any distinctively Jewish observances, must perceive a difference between himself and his non-Jewish surroundings. That is the moment at which Jewish religious education begins ; but before I enter upon the details of its gradual progress with individual children, there are certain general points to be considered.

I have already remarked that Judaism, as a religion distinct from pure monotheism, is founded on the Bible. But even though our belief with regard to the chief Jewish *dogmas* found in the Pentateuch remain unchanged, it is very probable that the advance of biblical criticism has more or less altered our attitude towards the Bible as a whole. Are then our children to possess the Bible of our childhood or that of our riper years ? It is a most difficult question, and one which I am inclined (at the risk, I admit, of pleasing nobody) to answer with a compromise. I would not thrust biblical criticism upon children, but I would not hide its existence from them, nor, when they become aware of it (which at the present day, they cannot fail to do sooner or later), would I let them think it wrong doing, or incompatible with love and reverence for the Bible. On the contrary, I would tell them that interest in and attachment to the divinely (but not verbally) inspired book prompts many learned men to devote their time and labour to its study ; to find out all they can concerning it, the dates at which its various parts were written, and other matters, which children could not be expected to understand, more especially as the students themselves are by no means all agreed as to the results of their labours. Bible history, simply and suitably

taught,¹ must be among the first steps of a child's religious education. It then remains for individual parents to decide whether they will lead their children along the road of biblical criticism, or whether, having shown them that there is such a road, they will bid them turn aside from it even as they themselves have done. If children are thus made aware of the existence of biblical criticism, and have been taught to consider it neither wrong nor unlawful, it will be no sudden wrench to them, if their minds are so constituted as to cause them to plunge into its depths. If, on the other hand, nature and education lead them to avoid it, they will not commit the wrong of judging intolerantly those whose views on the subject are different from their own. It may be that many orthodox parents will think that children ought either to be kept unaware of the existence of biblical criticism, or, if this is not possible, to have it represented to them as something reprehensible. This appears to me both unjust and unwise—unjust, because it assumes such criticism to be irreligious and irreverent, and unwise, because nobody can know beforehand what turn the mind of a child may take when he has grown to manhood. The child of orthodox parents may, indeed, continue through life to believe with unquestioning faith the teaching of his youth, but he may also become one of that no less earnest and religiously minded number, in whose "honest doubt" there lies more faith "than in half the creeds."

The next general point to be considered is, with regard to the ritual and ceremonial side of Judaism, whether we should make our children, *as children*, keep more strictly to observances and ceremonies than we perhaps do ourselves, or than we think would be necessary for them in after life. Experience shows that they are likely to cast off something—shall we of set purpose give them what we consider a superfluity, so that when that is dropped they may still retain what we consider the essentials? It *sounds* expedient; but the word expedient has a false ring in connection with religion, and I for one should avoid the plan. The only case in which such a method appears to me desirable is where the parents themselves are in a transition state, attached to Judaism, yet doubtful of the *binding* nature of its ceremonial observances. Such parents will probably desire their children, as children, to keep to what they themselves were taught, and leaving the future undecided will desire them to begin life, conforming to those forms and observances which now appeal to them (the parents) more from associations and filial piety than from absolutely

¹ I shall return to Bible teaching in detail later on.

religious convictions. But these are somewhat exceptional cases, where the parent, in spite of what his own views may now be, desires his children's early years to be safeguarded by religious observances, even though he doubts their power over maturer age. Exceptional, too, I venture to add, is the case of those who keep exactly to all that their parents did before them, and desire to bind their children to do the same now and always. It is unnecessary here to touch upon those who openly desire to cast off as much of Judaism and Jewish observances as possible, without absolutely ceasing to be Jews. The larger number look at the matter from a different point of view; there are certain forms, customs and observances that they keep themselves, and desire their children to keep. Still they have a consciousness that they themselves have cast off some things that their parents kept; will not their children do likewise? This is a possibility which we must face boldly and do our best to avoid, even though we are constrained to admit that our utmost efforts may be insufficient to ward it off altogether. One weapon, indeed, we have which our parents had not, fore-knowledge. They did not contemplate the probability of such a thing, and consequently to *guard* against it did not enter into their scheme of religious education. We, in our childhood, were carefully instructed—some of us in the Biblical Judaism I have endeavoured to outline on a previous page, some of us in what I venture to call Biblico-Talmudical Judaism, and were duly taught that this was what we were bound to believe and to practise as Jews and Jewesses. But I for one do not remember that we were ever explicitly bidden to keep to those laws and observances after we had grown to manhood and womanhood, in spite of what we might see others do, and in spite of all temptations to the contrary. It was taken for granted that having been duly trained in certain forms and observances, we should keep to them without change. But at the present day all is different. The ceremonial part of religion is maintained less firmly, and if we want to prevent our children from letting it slip from their grasp we must warn them of the possibility of their doing so, and guard against it as best we can. To achieve this end, we must ask ourselves frankly this question: are we prepared not only to make certain sacrifices ourselves for our religion, and for those religious observances which we consider part of that religion, but what seems harder to many of us, are we prepared to demand them of our children? If not, if we allow the claims of convenience, pleasure, or secular education to set aside these observances, we are unbinding with one hand what we bound with the other, and religious in-

struction becomes a mockery. I need hardly say that when I speak of a sacrifice, I am far from wishing that our children should consider they are making one. On the contrary, I would for every reason far rather that they remained unconscious of any sacrifice being made, and were simply happy in the performance of their religious duties, and unaware of the possibility of setting them aside. But this is made difficult now-a-days both by the want of uniformity among Jews themselves, and the closeness of their intercourse with their non-Jewish surroundings, both of which causes must sometimes expose even young children to the temptation of, at any rate, desiring to set aside some observance that deprives them of a pleasure enjoyed by others. When this occurs, it is our duty to demand of our children the voluntary sacrifice which we must otherwise insist on their making, even though it be unwillingly. It is important to remember that a voluntary sacrifice in childhood is more likely than a compulsory one to be followed in manhood by similar offerings on the shrine of religion, and if we have succeeded in making our children love Judaism and "the yoke of the law," and have moreover shown them by word and deed that we do not ourselves hold back from similar sacrifices, we may feel sure that we shall not be asking more of them than they will be willing to give.

But it is hard, some parents say, for children to have to make voluntary sacrifices for their religion. Why? Do we not, as soon as they have reached the age of reason, frequently and necessarily require of them sacrifices of enjoyment and leisure in the interests of health and of education, or even, as they grow older, of certain conventional rules of society, certain persons, certain circumstances? And is not our religion as well worth a sacrifice as these? By all means let us impose on our children no sacrifice that can be avoided at the cost of trouble to ourselves, but let us not hesitate to demand it of them, if it can only be avoided at the cost of infringing what we consider, and have taught them to consider, a binding law¹ of our religion, that religion for which our forefathers sacrificed not only their own lives, but, what was far dearer to them, the lives of their children.

I have hitherto laid down only such general suggestions as would be equally appropriate to all, or nearly all, forms of Judaism. In passing on to the religious education as applied

¹ It is hardly needful to observe that there are cases of necessity, where the infringement of a law may become a duty; but, fortunately, this is not an every-day occurrence.

to individual children, it is impossible to avoid following more or less the lines of my own particular form, and building upon them a certain system of education. Of this system I can only say, that I do not advocate it as the one and only method, but merely as the logical outcome of my own religious opinions.

The special doctrines that distinguish Judaism from theism, *i.e.*, a firm belief in the revelation of the Pentateuch, and an equally firm one in God's election of the people of Israel to be the proclaimers of his unity and the witnesses to his truth, are so simple and so forcible that there can be no difficulty in impressing them on our children when they have once become acquainted with the first principle of monotheism. These two doctrines form the centre point round which our Jewish teaching revolves and with which it is indissolubly connected. They form the spirit that gives life to the whole framework of ceremonialism, and they must be our guides at every step of our children's religious education. Pure monotheism, however, comes first, and the religious education of every child begins with a few words of daily prayer, and the first simple instruction as regards the existence of God. For some considerable period it is not to be expected that a child's prayer should be anything but a habit that has nothing in common with a devotional frame of mind. "*Douce religion, qui s'égaie et qui rit,*" is what Victor Hugo has aptly called a child's prayer. Still, it is impossible for us to say how soon some feeling beyond that of mere habit is awakened, and it will be aroused all the sooner if we carefully impress on the child that we (his parents) are as much dependent on a beneficent providence as he is himself; that we, too, say our prayers as he does, and that we are as weak and unwise in comparison with God as he is. It may seem puerile to insist on what is apparently so obvious, but children are singularly prone to consider customs as applying only to themselves, and it is more than likely that a young child, unless otherwise taught, might for some time look on prayer as a discipline arranged for the benefit of children only.

The first distinctively *Jewish* feature in a child's religious education is probably almost contemporaneous with his first prayer: it is the observance of the Sabbath. As soon as he is old enough to find pleasure in anything beyond the toys of absolute infancy, as soon, for instance, as he can amuse himself with scribbling on bits of paper, it is time to put that and similar occupations out of reach on Saturday. We have merely to say: "We do not do these things to-day; it is the Sabbath. You will know what that means when you are

older." Thus the habit of keeping the Sabbath, of making a difference between its occupations and those of other days, becomes fixed long before the child is old enough to understand the commandment with regard to it. He will probably have been for a year or more accustomed to the daily prayer and elementary Sabbath-keeping before it is time for the next step, namely, some form of home service on Saturdays.

It is rightly not the usual custom to take children to synagogue at a very early age. There is, moreover, the probability of their spending some weeks, or even months, of every year in some locality where there is no synagogue. The home service is therefore an important point in Jewish religious education. If the word service is, however, supposed to mean transferring the Sabbath service as read in the synagogue to our home, I would prefer to substitute the words "Saturday reading." To those who are accustomed to the synagogue ritual, it may seem natural to let that "reading" consist of a more or less lengthy portion of the Sabbath service, and a brief selection from the law. But to children, and especially to those who are unused to the synagogue ritual, and are too young to read the Bible for themselves, this is monotonous and somewhat profitless. I suggest reversing the process, and making a reading from the Bible the principal feature of the children's home service, followed by a *very brief* portion of the ritual, which portion should not be varied, but gradually lengthened as the child grows older. It is difficult to say at what age these readings should begin. I should consider four years not too young for a child of average intelligence, and the necessary discipline of sitting still is not without its value. It is a child's earliest experience of "keeping his foot" when he goes into the house of God, and the instinct of reverence is cultivated even before the reverence itself is there. At whatever age the Bible readings are begun, it is incumbent upon every Jewish parent, when he *does* begin them, to make his child clearly and distinctly conscious of two things: first, that the Bible teaches him his religion, his duty towards God and man, and, secondly, that he will learn from it the history of his own race, the history of the Jewish people. This latter is a point which cannot be too strongly insisted on in the religious education of every Jewish child; the distinct consciousness of his racial identity with the Jews of Bible times will quicken his interest in their history as contained in the Scripture narrative, and the study of Judaism as a religion must go hand in hand with that history.

Bible-reading is thus in our home service a feature the importance of which it is impossible to overrate, and I use

the words Bible-reading in their most literal sense. Read the Bible itself to your children. Let them, on the one hand, hear no "Bible stories" that reduce the grand simplicity of the Scriptures to the petty level of childish tales; let them, on the other hand, read no Bible history that secularises and makes a school-book of the sacred narrative.¹ Read to them from the Bible itself what you judge to be fit for them to hear, picking out the salient chapters that make a connected history; and omitting not merely the many parts unsuitable for children, but also at the first reading all that is unlikely to interest them. Do not neglect to explain fully and carefully as you go on, and, above all (if you wish them to take a real interest in the Scriptures), allow any and every question that they wish to put to you about what you have read. It is not always easy to answer these questions, but it is our duty to endeavour to do so. I do not say we "must" answer them, for there are some unanswerable questions, to which only the following replies can be made. First, "I do not know that sufficiently well or positively myself to be able to tell you." Secondly, "You are not yet old enough to understand that thoroughly, be satisfied for the present with what I have told you." And, thirdly (when a child is a little older), I would bid him remember that God's ways are not as our ways, and that the wisest of us are unable to understand them. If I am told that all this is "begging the question," I reply that it is the simple truth, and, being so, will satisfy the most inquiring children.

It would lead me into unwarrantable lengths if I attempted to answer in detail the difficult question of what to omit and what to retain in reading the Bible to children. Moreover, any scheme for the purpose would have to be a progressive one, suited to the gradual development of children from the ages of—let us say—four to fourteen. I will merely suggest the following points that appear to me worthy of notice.

With regard to the historical part of the Bible, we must remember that, with the exception of the early chapters of Genesis, it is neither more nor less than a continuous history of the Jewish people. We must therefore present it to children

¹ I would not be understood to condemn all Bible histories for children above the age of twelve or thirteen, but I would prefer doing without them if possible, and depending on verbal commentaries and explanations, and certainly the first knowledge of the Scriptures should be gained from the Bible itself. The difficulty of placing the Bible in the hands of children to read for themselves is not met by either "Bible stories" or "Bible history." It is a difficulty which appears to me best met by expurgated Bibles, to be given to children after they have been carefully taught the history of the Bible, as already suggested.

in that light, and, in order to do so, it will be best to omit at first all passages and incidents that do not bear directly upon this main purport—the election and divine mission of Israel, as exemplified in its history. Not only will such a course place the Bible before the child's mind as a historic whole, but it will also guide us in the omission of the many incidents likely to confuse the young mind by too soon awakening either the sense of doubt as to the literal truth of such and such a passage, or the spirit of criticism concerning the right and wrong of such and such an incident.¹

There are many passages of this nature which do not really affect the history of the origin and subsequent career of the Jewish nation, and consequently it is not necessary for a child to be made acquainted with them under the age of ten or twelve, according to the quicker or slower development of his character. Afterwards, when the important and epoch-making events of Scripture have been firmly rooted in his mind, such details will take their rightful place in his comprehension, and will not affect his feelings towards the Bible as a whole.

We should, on the other hand, avoid the common habit of giving undue prominence to such chapters as are likely to take a child's fancy, such as the history of Joseph, of the infant Samuel, of David and Goliath, a system which leads children to consider the Bible as a mere series of episodic narratives, instead of a continuous history.

It is less superfluous than it appears to add a reminder that, if we wish children to remember anything of Bible history after the death of Moses, it is useless to read the rest through to them once only, and after that confine ourselves to reading and re-reading the Pentateuch. The latter is, indeed, of the most vital importance, but post-Pentateuchal history should not therefore be neglected as is too often the case, but should be made both familiar and interesting to our children. Their interest being once fairly aroused in the history of their own people, they will not only be eager to follow it to the confines of the Bible, but beyond it, through the heroic period of the Maccabees, and still further, after the final dispersion of the Jewish nation. At the risk of appearing irrelevant, I cannot help here remarking on the incredible ignorance of Jewish children in our own country (I do not know how it is abroad) with regard to post-Biblical Jewish history. The Maccabean epoch is probably more or less familiar to them, they are just aware of the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of

¹ I do not here refer to the many passages which are absolutely unsuitable for children.

the Jews, and they have been made acquainted with the gloomy story of the Inquisition in their general historical studies, but beyond that they know nothing of the history of the people of Israel during the last eighteen hundred years. Surely this state of things is inconsistent with the interest we take ourselves and wish our children to take also in the history of our own race, and with the stress we lay on their being familiar with the minutest details of that race's origin as related in the Bible. I do not place the knowledge of post-Biblical Jewish history on anything like a religious footing; I only plead against its being so neglected as it certainly is at present, not only because of the reasons just given, but also because some knowledge of the trials and sufferings through which our forefathers remained faithful to their religion will deepen our children's love for that religion which has passed unscathed through so many centuries of persecution and peril.

The non-historical parts of the Bible offer a wide field for Sabbath readings. The Pentateuchal code, both ceremonial and ethical, copious selections from the Psalms, certain portions of Proverbs, and, finally, carefully made selections from the books of the Prophets, can all be brought within the comprehension of children, though the Prophets (with the exception of a few isolated verses here and there) will hardly be suitable for those under the age of ten. The ceremonial and ethical code of the Pentateuch and the Psalms will be amply sufficient until at least that age. With regard to the ceremonial code, we should avoid wearying children with what is neither interesting nor necessary for them to hear. A very brief selection from the portions concerning the sacrifices, the land and sanitary laws, and the building of the Tabernacle, will be all that is needed to prevent their being wholly ignorant of these subjects, and will leave us free to give all details of the institutions that form our present ritual code, as well as of the ethical precepts. It is needless at the present day to insist on the place the latter occupy, both in the Pentateuch and other parts of the Bible, nor on the forcible manner in which is demonstrated the futility of outward signs of religion, if unaccompanied by the religion of the heart. Nor does it come within my province to show how the pure monotheism of the Bible can and should be taught to children, but there is one point which appears to me is not always sufficiently emphasized, on which, therefore, I venture to touch, namely, that it is this pure monotheism which gives a religious motive to morality.

The non-historical parts of the Bible fall naturally into three

(or counting the purely Prophetic writings into four) divisions: First, what is in truth the spiritual essence of Judaism, the doctrine of monotheism and its kindred subjects, the relations of God to man; secondly, the ceremonialism, framed as we know for the use of the Jewish race; and thirdly, the ethical precepts, which have gradually become the property, not of Judaism only, but of the whole civilised world. In making our children acquainted with these three divisions, it should be our constant aim to show them how religion in its widest, purest, and most spiritual sense—love of and faith in God and obedience to his will—is indeed the key-note, the mainspring, the vivifying principle, both of the ceremonial and ethical laws. Unless we succeed in convincing them of this truth, ceremonialism can never be anything but an outward form, nor shall we attain the great object of making the love of God an incentive to virtue. This key-note, as I have called it, is struck with no uncertain sound in the Pentateuch. It is true that rewards and punishments are there distinctly held out as inducements to that adherence to monotheism, which the Israelites were so apt to neglect, but it is no less true that many exhortations to obedience to the divine Law, are constantly followed by the words: "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God, am holy." Accompanying the ethical precepts, we find no threats of punishment in cases of transgression, and but rarely (as, for instance, Deut. xxiv. 19) a promise of reward for obedience. If we turn to one chapter, among many, of ethical precepts, Leviticus xix., we shall see that no inducement of reward is held out for obedience, but, as is also the case in almost all other kindred passages, each clause is followed by the significant words: "I am the Lord," words surely not to be considered as a mere statement, but as an exhortation to obey, because such obedience is pleasing to God. The Psalms and Prophets are animated by a similar spirit, and it is by dwelling with special emphasis on this aspect of Bible teaching that we shall succeed in impressing it on our children, and, as I said before, in giving a religious motive to morality. If we can attain this object, we shall have made a great step in religious education, in the widest sense of the word, and that a study of the Bible will enable us to attain it, I fully believe.

Much more might be said on the important subject of Bible-readings, but the little I have suggested must suffice to show their importance in a child's religious education.

Home service or, later on, synagogue attendance, is a feature in the Sabbath morning of every Jewish family that has more of Judaism than the name; but the question how the rest of

the day is to be kept is very variously answered. My own reply is something after this fashion. In our observance of the Sabbath, we, for ourselves and our children, have to keep three objects in view. First, we desire to devote a portion of it to religious duties and to make it an aid to our moral and spiritual development; secondly, we wish to set the day apart and create a distinction between it and others; and thirdly, it should be our aim to make it a day, not only of rest, but also of happiness. Of the first of these three objects I have already spoken. In considering the second and third, we cannot fail to observe that at the present day there is a decided tendency to neglect the second for the sake of the third. We should, I need hardly say, endeavour as much as possible to combine the two. The old rabbinical rules that made it a Sabbath-breaking act to take a walk, to pick a flower, to carry an umbrella, have nearly universally fallen into abeyance. This, I must admit, does not seem to me to be regrettable, but there is, moreover, amongst many of us a strong inclination to disregard any fixed scheme of Sabbath-keeping, and to preach the doctrine of "every man doing what is right in his own eyes." It is one thing to lay aside certain outward laws from a conscientious conviction that keeping them does not increase, but rather lessens, the spiritual influence of the Sabbath; this is a matter of opinion, with which we may, or may not, agree, but which we have no right to blame. It is another and very different thing to cast aside such laws, because keeping them interferes with our convenience or our pleasure. This is an attitude which we are certainly justified in deprecating, but I am not here concerned with the Sabbath as regards adults, but merely as regards children.

The generally prohibited occupations¹ may be briefly catalogued as including all forms of manual occupation, such as writing, drawing or needlework, all riding or driving, and all such amusements as theatres and dances. To these, universal custom has added games of chance, such as cards, and almost equally universally the use of musical instruments. Custom has also to a considerable extent vetoed outdoor amusements, such as cricket and other athletic sports. Personally, I much regret that this should be the case, and I think there is so much to be said against their exclusion, that I cannot but hope that a change will ere long be made in this particular. One additional word as to not writing on Saturday, which many now-

¹ It is needful to repeat again that I am writing neither of the ultra orthodox nor of the reverse.

a-days consider an unnecessary and undesirable restriction. It is, however, one which I should be very unwilling to see withdrawn, inasmuch as writing on the Sabbath tends to lessen the difference between that and other days. A child's lessons, a woman's household and social duties, a man's business, are all to a great extent carried on in writing; for many of us it is almost synonymous with our daily work, and if we once begin it on the Sabbath it is most difficult to draw the line and say, this letter is for pleasure, that for business, this piece of writing is an amusement, that a labour. I therefore think it right to refrain from writing on Saturday, and to cause our children to refrain from it likewise, though as an exceptional matter I should not hesitate to transgress the rule.

This "index expurgatorius," though no doubt many may find something to add to it and many more something to exclude, appears to me very fairly calculated to meet both objects in view—*i.e.*, it makes a decided difference between Sabbath and week-days, and yet leaves much room for enjoyment both for adults and children. Books of all kinds, walks, many in-door and some out-door games and sports, and the social and family intercourse, which has always been considered especially appropriate to Sabbath afternoons, ought to be enough to make the day enjoyable. It is, moreover, the special duty of Jewish parents to make the day pleasant to their children. The claims of business and society on the one hand and of education on the other necessarily separate us a good deal from our children in the week; let us, therefore, spend the Saturday together as much as possible, and let them see that we find it a day of rest and happiness, "a delight and the holy of the Lord." It behoves us always to remember, moreover, that our religion is not that of the State, and that it is much more necessary for us to fence round our Sabbath and other ceremonial institutions with careful observances than it is for those whose day of rest is that of the whole country. On the other hand, it is neither to be expected nor to be desired that we should re-enclose these observances with the double and treble Talmudical fence of bygone days. We must endeavour to keep the middle road, and, if we wish our children to do the same, we must remember that example is better than precept, and that children are proverbially quick both to listen and to imitate. Let them never hear from our lips an expression of annoyance at the fact of the Sabbath preventing our enjoyment of some pleasure or the following of some occupation, let them see that we keep it as we desire them to do—cheerfully and conscientiously—and we shall then have

done all that is in our power to make them keep it thus through life.

I may appear to have dwelt at a disproportionate length on the Sabbath and its ordinances, but it is a very important item in Jewish ceremonialism, the one, which more perhaps than any other, combines the inner and outer religion, the one moreover which most strongly and constantly affects the manner of our daily life. It is obvious this must be so, since it concerns a seventh part of our time, and since its careful observance demands, more than that of any other institution, a certain amount of self-sacrifice, both from us and from our children. But is equally obvious that at the present day the Sabbath is one of the most valuable instruments for keeping Jews and Judaism in the close union in which they ought to dwell. Therefore (setting aside the question of religious duty as to the Sabbath in itself and for itself) it is incumbent on those parents who wish their children to be Jews and not theists, to enforce its observance both by precept and example, and to make keeping it, if I may speak so plainly, a matter of conscience, not of convenience.

The festival code is another of those outward signs of religion which should come as events of importance in the life of a Jewish child. It is surely unnecessary to enter here into a detailed account of the various Jewish holidays. I assume that their purport and the ritual observances connected with them, will be duly explained to children, and that as soon as they are old enough they will be taken to synagogue on festivals as well as on the Sabbath. As with the latter so with the former. If we wish our children to lay stress on and value the holidays, we must begin by doing so ourselves. Moreover, we should be careful to let them share with us in the ceremonial we are observing. Nothing is more typical of the Jewish blending of religious and family ties than the ceremony of the first nights of Passover—the Seder—in which a child is made to take so distinct and yet so childlike a part. It is most impressive for adults, and at the same time admirably calculated to awaken first a child's curiosity and interest, and then an increasing attachment for his religion and his race. Such was clearly the intention of the ancient compilers of the ritual, who carefully classified the four kinds of children to be instructed—"the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, and the son who has not capacity to inquire," and though the quaintness of the wording may cause a smile, yet it suggests much over which parents will do well to ponder.

I have on a previous page already spoken at some length on

the remaining division of Jewish ritual observances, namely, the dietary laws. It is unnecessary, therefore, to recur to the subject, more especially as children at home have little or no voluntary action in the matter. Subsequently, I would endeavour to lead them on the lines I have already indicated as those I follow myself.

The study of Hebrew is so closely connected with Jewish ceremonialism that it may be considered a part of religious education. May the day be far distant, or rather may it never dawn, when Hebrew is excluded from our synagogues. I am aware that there is a diversity of opinion on this point, but at any rate all will agree that at present everybody attending synagogue ought to have some knowledge of the Hebrew language. "Some knowledge" is, however, an elastic term, and many people now-a-days are much inclined to interpret it by "as little as possible." It does not to me appear to be an unreasonable expectation that a child of thirteen should be able to translate grammatically the Sabbath and Festival Ritual, a considerable portion of the Pentateuch, a certain number of the Psalms, and perhaps some parts of the Prophets. To accomplish this, he must have had some years' regular lessons, and must have acquired the language in the same way as he would be taught Greek or Latin. I am willing to admit that there is a difficulty with boys, as they are most frequently obliged to begin the study of the two above-named languages, in addition to Hebrew, before that age. Still I think it is very possible by beginning *young*, and working regularly and little by little for six or seven years, to achieve that result. It is an especially desirable one in their case, as boys, unless brought up entirely at home, will for educational reasons have less time allotted for their Hebrew studies after than before that age. This is a necessity which we must face, unless we alter the whole curriculum of secular education; but if that point has once been reached, a good foundation will have been laid, and a small amount of regular work will enable a boy to maintain himself throughout his school life on the same level of proficiency. Nor is it then too much to expect that when he has grown to manhood he will be able to "follow" intelligently in Hebrew the prayer-book ritual, the law, and the customary portion from the Prophets. With girls the case is different. The classics are not indispensable in their education, and there is no reason why they should not continue their Hebrew lessons with the same exact regularity as their other studies throughout the years of their early girlhood as well as of their childhood.

It is very usual for children to receive instruction in the dogmas and rites of Judaism, and also in Bible history, at the same time as instruction in Hebrew; and the usual "Bar-mitzvah," or confirmation ceremony, is now almost invariably preceded by several months of careful non-parental religious teaching, in which girls frequently also take part. But if parents have done their duty by their children, this course of instruction should be little more than a repetition, and to some extent a development, of all that the children have already been taught. There is, indeed, one topic, which certainly should not be touched on in early childhood, and we may even doubt whether it should be handled, even at the age of which we are speaking. I mean the doctrines of Christianity. The reason generally given in favour of Jewish children (I am not speaking of those under the age of twelve at the earliest) being made acquainted with the dogmas of the Christian faith is that, if we do not do so ourselves, we run the risk of others representing it to them in so alluring a light as to endanger their adherence to Judaism. Our efforts to attach our children to our own religion would have been useless indeed if this danger is really to be feared! Still, it is as well to guard even against the most improbable events, besides which, as children grow towards adolescence, it becomes difficult, almost impossible, to keep them from all literature or conversation likely to give them information on the subject. It seems, therefore, on the whole, best to give them, quite simply and with a careful avoidance of intolerance, some general outline of the tenets of Christianity, showing them that the leading principle of its religious teaching is diametrically opposed to that of Judaism, while its ethics, on the other hand, are developed on the lines laid down in the Old Testament. This appears to me all that is either necessary or desirable.

I have endeavoured, in these pages, to trace the religious education of the Jewish child, or rather a part of such education, for according to my original intention, I have not dealt with the most fundamental but most general principles of our religion, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, nor have I touched, except in passing, on the wide field of Bible ethics. My sole topic has been the specific doctrines and ritual observances that separate Judaism from theism, considered with reference to religious education; and I am well aware that I am far from having exhausted that topic, even as regards home teaching, while I have been compelled to leave wholly unexplored the important subject of school life at the present day in connection with Judaism—

not from want of interest, but from lack of personal knowledge and experience.

One word in conclusion: if we wish Judaism to be a reality to our children we must carry it into our daily life. We must not treat it as a machine, wound up and set going on certain special occasions, and at all other times locked away carefully with our prayer-book and Talith. It must be with us on week-days as well as on Sabbaths. Not that I would needlessly multiply religious observances and ceremonies, other than those I have already enumerated, either for ourselves or our children, but I would make the spirit of Judaism the constantly present mainspring of our actions, so that it may colour our secular as well as our religious life. But to achieve this end, our Judaism, with its doctrines and its ritual observances, must be with us, not only in our synagogues, but in our homes; not only in our homes, but abroad. We must carry it with us wherever we go, and we must train our children to do so likewise. Let them go out into the world as Jews, not as religious cosmopolitans, in whose breasts the words, "I am a Jew," awaken no responsive thrill; as Jews, whose Judaism is the religion in which they live and in which they are prepared to die, not merely one of many creeds, touching them not more closely than any of the others. Let them join heartily with their fellow-countrymen in all good and useful labour, let them serve their native land to the utmost of their power, but let them never forsake the banner, which every Jew ought to be proud to bear until—to repeat the passage that cannot be too often quoted—"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas," the banner, on which are inscribed the words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

ALICE LUCAS.
